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25 YEAR RE-REVIEW

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7 May 1952

MEMORANDUM FOR: [ ] O/NE

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FROM: [ ] O/SI

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SUBJECT: Estimate of Soviet Aircraft Production and O/B Strength

1. Following your request that I check into the procedure for estimating Soviet aircraft production rates and O/B strength, particularly as these relate to SIE-5, I talked to members of O/RR and O/CI.

2. Generally, both production and O/B estimates are based on incomplete and possibly outdated intelligence. However, I believe that the estimates, while open to question, are still the best intelligence on the two subjects which ~~are~~ available.

3. Attached hereto (Incl. 1) are the [ ] formulas used in estimating production. Interested individuals in O/RR have informed me that:

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a. A project is underway in Industrial Division to assemble all the basic information on the Soviet aircraft industry which may be available. This work is a long project, now underway approximately 6 months, and about 12 months from completion. The project should yield better values for the formulae factors. At this time, there is not sufficient information to challenge the estimates made by USAF, and in fact, there may never be sufficient grounds to challenge the estimates.

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b. Present estimates are based in large part on [ ] dated no later than sometime in 1944, and in coverage, extend East to the Urals. This data has been modified by intelligence obtained from [ ] and latest dates of this type are about 1948.

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c. While O/RR recognizes the fact that the basic intelligence may be questioned, no better method of estimating is known to the people working in the field, nor is there any better basic information available. O/RR is searching for the better intelligence and methodology. However, since no one has offered a better solution, and since the present method appears logical and honestly carried out, O/RR is in the position of accepting USAF estimates of production unless obviously in error.

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d. O/RR is also engaged in an overall project to assemble intelligence on Soviet capability in several basic economic and industrial areas - steel, aviation gas, aluminum, etc. This study, when completed (possibly for NIE-65) will furnish a "feasibility" matrix for any particular estimate in a specific field, although it will not result in conclusions that aircraft production

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(or any other specific) is "such and so".

3. With regard to O/B estimates, the situation is similar although O/CI does not contemplate the establishment of a methodology for independent (and thus duplicatory) checks of USAF estimates. O/B estimates are regarded as in the primary field of interest of USAF, and unless obviously in error, as not questioned. It does appear that the USAF production estimates play a major role in final totals of O/B estimates, since the only visible Soviet aircraft are in the SovZone and the Far East, and these figures are reconciled with production estimates to account for the difference by estimating strengths of units in the interior. These estimates are reasoned guesses as to interior strength, but are made by the best qualified group available.

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4. O/SI likewise is not in a position to make independent O/B or production estimates.

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